# B+B Unternehmens- beratung

Successfully bridging the old with the new to gain competitive advantage through reusing long-standing, trusted COBOL solutions

### Who is B+B Unternehmensberatung?

B+B Unternehmensberatung has been leveraging their extensive knowledge and experience to support clients since 1986. Competence, trust, and a respectful partnership are all hallmarks of the company's philosophy.

### Legendary COBOL Lives On

COBOL has entered its seventh decade of industry service and, although market studies have predicted the end of COBOL for a long time, it is still going very strong. Business

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**DR. SÖREN KEMMANN**
Managing Director
B+B Unternehmensberatung

reliance on COBOL is clear through its use in 70 percent of global transaction processing systems. Any time you phone a call center, transfer money, contact a government department, ship a parcel, buy something online at a whole range of retailers, book a vacation, trade stocks, or even check your favorite baseball team's seasonal statistics, you interact with COBOL. But, even though long-established COBOL applications are powering the core system operations supporting today's business, IT strategy is always focused on next-generation investment.

Dr. Sören Kemmann, Managing Director for OpenText™ partner B+B, is no stranger to this dilemma: "The core issue is often not with the application itself, but with the rigid infrastructure surrounding it and the lack of integration and fluid data exchange. Awkward, outdated technology was never designed to support today's rapid pace of business change, let alone the next wave of technology—cloud, mobile, next-generation architectures—that few could have predicted when writing the original code, sometimes more than 30 years ago. This inflexibility can have disastrous consequences for a client's competitive market position."

### Modernization Path for COBOL

With increasing demand for open systems that can freely interact with each other, COBOL

*Unternehmensberatung*

## At a Glance

■ **Industry**
Services—Business

■ **Location**
Germany

■ **Challenge**
Support clients to modernize mission-critical systems for flexible and cost-effective access to new channels and markets

■ **Products and Services**
Micro Focus Visual COBOL
Micro Focus Visual COBOL Analyzer
Micro Focus Enterprise Analyzer

■ **Critical Success Factors**
+ Successful partnership delivers effective modernization
+ Open up and integrate previously isolated monolithic applications
+ Modern development IDE attracts wider range of developers
+ Mobile or cloud deployment has potential to reach new audiences

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users want to explore their options while keeping the business intelligence and experience contained in their solution. B+B are called upon to consult with organizations such as Audi, FIATC, and Studiosus to investigate the reuse of their core applications in a simple, easy, and cost-effective way. Dr. Kemmann explains: "Rewriting these complex applications is not an option. It would be too time-consuming and expensive to do. And with extensive customization over many years, replacing the solution with a commercial application is not possible either. Thankfully, these customers all backed COBOL in the early days. Application modernization means new life for existing COBOL applications, enabled through smarter development tooling and robust platform choice."

A typical modernization project starts with an analysis of the existing system. Micro Focus™ Visual COBOL Analyzer by OpenText™ and Micro Focus™ Enterprise Analyzer by OpenText™ are the tools of choice for B+B at this stage: "COBOL Analyzer and Enterprise Analyzer visualize how applications fit into the overall architecture, outlining their dependencies and relationships. It also shows the impact of application change within programs, data flows, and source modules so that we can make intelligent modernization recommendations. It is also a great exercise for identifying redundant code which immediately relieves the application maintenance burden."

A small subset of the original system is then used to build a pilot, often leveraging Micro Focus Visual COBOL. Micro Focus Visual COBOL includes a native code generator to automatically compile COBOL code for the leading distributed enterprise platforms. This showcases the possibilities and often astounds clients, according to Dr. Kemmann: "Up to this point clients still tend to be skeptical and expect a huge technical effort to modernize. However, seeing their COBOL code running happily in a modern development environment changes their perception immediately. [Micro Focus] Visual COBOL can open them up to the cloud, DevOps, and opportunities for mobile access they hadn't even yet considered."

## Increased Competitive Advantage

Clients rightly want to take a low-risk route to modernization that will not jeopardize the running of what is often a mission-critical system. Therefore it is vital to plan carefully and take the modernization journey step by step, reaping the benefits along the way.

The results of a well-planned and executed application modernization are clear for all to see. "Our clients are able to open up their long-standing, trusted COBOL solutions to entirely new technology and channels, and reach new markets as a result," says Dr. Kemmann. "Their solution is now integrated with other key systems and data flows freely between them, enabling faster transaction times for their customers and transparency for all stakeholders. A distributed architecture is invariably more cost-effective than the monolithic infrastructure they had, and their development teams benefit from a modern IDE helping them respond faster to ever-changing business requirements."

On the partnership with OpenText™, Dr. Kemmann says: "The pragmatic approach embodied in the Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) Modernization Maturity Model, the Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) blueprint for modernization, matches our own philosophy perfectly, allowing our clients a low-risk path to digital transformation. [Micro Focus] Visual COBOL keeps surprising us with enhanced capabilities in every new version. In the latest release we are excited to see the opportunity for in-program code identification and slicing which will save even more time. COBOL is far from dead in our view, and it seems the world agrees with us!"

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